

# 2004 Report of Accomplishments

## Chelan County Conservation District



### Natural Resource Improvements in 2004 - Summary

- Focused on water quality improvements, education and planning. Completed 10 year watershed planning effort for the Entiat River valley. Conducted data collection and monitoring, assisted with development of TMDL for the Wenatchee watershed. Promoted BMP Implementation, reduced threats from wildland fire in the urban interface, encouraged water metering and provided riparian restoration support for county public works projects as well as plantings on private land.
- More than three miles of habitat in Mill Creek made available for Endangered Upper Columbia River Steelhead by providing passage through an old diversion structure.
- Restored 1,000 feet of river bank for Chelan County Public Works project at Sleepy Hollow.



Mill Creek Project

### Mission of the Chelan County Conservation District (District)

The purpose of the Chelan County Conservation District is to encourage stewardship and conservation of all natural resources for current and future residents in Chelan County by:

- Being an active advocate for wise land use and water management decisions.
- Promoting a reasonable approach to environmental problems.
- Providing local, voluntary, non-regulatory solutions to local environmental problems.
- Educating both adults and youth about natural resources stewardship.
- Monitoring and responding to future trends that affect the environment.

### Water Quality Implementation

- Recognizing the need for educated and informed citizens leading to proactive cooperators, the District used its Conservation Commission Implementation Grant funding primarily for education and outreach (see below).
- One farm plan was developed and seven other landowners initiated plans or practices. Approximately 54 acres of forestland were replanted with more than 12,000 native plants as a result of the annual Tree Sale. The District played an active role in support of the Local Work Group for prioritization of federal program funds in the region. Staff assisted with information and processing of 55 EQIP applications, which resulted in 35 contracts including \$673,000 in practices on 1,039 acres. Staff will assist with associated planning and BMP implementation in the coming year.

### Basic Funding and Local Funding

- Basic Funding is used to support staff and cover expenses for general operations, including the following: conduct elections, hold meetings, develop and adopt budgets and plans, conduct evaluations and audits, purchase and repair equipment, maintain appropriate liability insurance, keep the public informed, and report employment, financial and operations information to a variety of agencies and entities, in addition to documenting, storing and safeguarding records.
- The District has been able to leverage considerable grant funds on behalf of the citizens. Most of the District's on-the-ground activities were accomplished through these complementary projects, which have also led to increased credibility and community trust. More than \$63,000 was expended for on-the-landscape improvements in 2003, along with an estimated \$250,000 in technical assistance.
- Local match is a requirement of the Basic Funding Program. The two sources combine to provide the core operations funding for the District. From this central point grow the various programs and projects that benefit the natural resources of the county.

### Professional Engineering

- Designed project for a private landowner to reduce erosion, stabilize the bank and control the grade at the confluence of the stream and an irrigation return on Mission Creek. The District has also exchanged District Engineer time on project inspection and monitoring for NRCS Engineer services to design structures for the Entiat River that require specific training and experience.

### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- The District fulfilled its commitment for technical assistance and maintenance on two existing projects. The landowners were able to continue the work started under this program. 300 trees were replanted on a particularly harsh site that is slowly responding to restoration efforts.

## **Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration**

- *By connecting a proactive landowner with complementary funding programs, the Mill Creek project accomplished multiple resource improvements and made efficient use of both public funds and private cost share. Six cross-vane log weir structures were installed, along with a fish screen and metering equipment for the irrigation diversion at the site. More than 3 miles of rearing habitat with spawning areas was opened, with additional rearing and spawning habitat established at the site along with bank stabilization and riparian restoration. Endangered Upper Columbia River steelhead will directly benefit, as will endangered spring Chinook salmon and threatened bull trout.*
  - *Chelan County Public Works installed protection measures for the road and bridge at Sleepy Hollow, with provisions to add instream habitat features and riparian restoration at the site. Under a cooperative agreement with the County, the District directed a Washington Conservation Corps planting crew and installed an irrigation system at the site to help establish the 1500 native plants used in the project.*
  - *On behalf of Chelan County, the District began work on a county-wide Community Fire Plan, beginning with the communities in the urban interface areas identified to be at high risk for wildfire.*
  - *Nearly 300 landowners received information on wildfire prevention under the Leavenworth Neighborhoods Fuels Reduction Project. All 134 homes in the project area were assessed for wildfire risk and provided a list of options for treatment. Thus far, 30 consultations have been completed and the work of reducing fire fuels has begun around 24 homes representing approximately 35 acres of treatment. Pruning, limbing and tree thinning will continue as fire risk levels permit. Additional consultations, site work and landscape-scale treatments are planned when funds become available.*
  - *Under the Wenatchee TMDL & BMP project, coordinated stream clean up work on Peshastin and Tronsen Creeks with assistance from Chelan County Inmate Worker crew.*
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## **Small Farm Programs**

- *Four conservation plans were completed for landowners in the Wenatchee watershed through the TMDL & BMP Implementation Grant. Staff also worked with volunteers from the 4H Forestry Education group to gather water quality data from Mission Creek landowners and promote efforts to address fecal coliform pollution in the watershed.*
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## **Community Collaboration & Coordination**

- *After more than 10 years of collaborative work by dedicated local landowners, agencies and interest groups, the 22-member Entiat Watershed Planning Unit on May 17, 2004 unanimously approved submittal of its Entiat WRIA 46 Management Plan to Chelan County. The plan addresses the required water quantity component and all three of the optional components, including instream flow, habitat and water quality. The plan reflects not only the ownership of the land, but also ownership of the plan's goals and objectives by the water users and interested parties in the Entiat valley. The District coordinated this work on behalf of the initiating governments under the state Watershed Planning Act, as well as managing multiple complementary grant projects for data collection, analysis and early implementation of recommended practices to benefit the Entiat watershed.*
  - *Coordinated the Water Quality Technical Subcommittee for the Wenatchee WRIA 45 Watershed Planning Unit and conducted cooperative data collection; developed TMDL draft plan for ultimate incorporation as the water quality component of the Wenatchee WRIA 45 Watershed Plan.*
  - *Water quality and flow monitoring conducted for Wenatchee and Entiat watershed planning processes in cooperation with Chelan County, WA Department of Ecology, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Forest Service, US Geological Survey, and Bonneville Power Administration.*
  - *The majority of the District's current projects are the direct result of successful previous efforts. Landowners and agency partners continue to request the District's leadership and expertise to assist them with achieving natural resource goals.*
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## **Information & Education**

- *Together with other grant projects, the Conservation Commission Implementation Grant provided opportunities to deliver conservation education to both children and adults. More than 350 high school students participated in the Kids in the Creek program, a comprehensive curriculum with hands-on field day experience. This well-established program attracts over \$10,000 in in-kind time and equipment from partner agencies. Other activities include water quality-themed displays at the Chelan County Fair and Wenatchee River Salmon Festival, hands-on educational activities for children at the festival, and a newsletter distributed three times per year to nearly 5,000 residents.*



Kids in the Creek 2004

## **Washington Conservation Districts assisting citizens with their conservation choices**